

TOWN OF GRAFTON
GRAFTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
30 PROVIDENCE ROAD
GRAFTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01519
(508) 839-5421

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MINUTES
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
January 26, 2016
Conference Room F
6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Daryl Rynning, Chairman
Laura Often, Vice Chair
Peter Carlson, Secretary
Maureen Cohen, Member

Student Bianca Carangelo
Representatives: Hannah Kelley

Also Present: Dr. James Cummings, Superintendent of Schools
Daniel Gale, Finance Director

Call to Order – Open Session at 6:35 p.m.

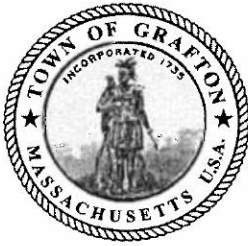
1. Public Hearing on the FY17 School Budget: Jay Cummings, Superintendent presented the FY17 School Operating Budget. Dr. Cummings said he was thankful to town for their support relative to the override, without that funding the district would be struggling. He began his review stating there was only one change from his preliminary presentations; he planned to shift funds from the capital budget to the staffing line. He noted that the stable funding level of 5 to 6% has allowed the district to remain whole. During the budget process Dr. Cummings felt he was in line the assumptions made to date relative to the Governor's budget and Chapter 70 funds, noting the Governor's budget was due out on the 27th. It was stated by Dr. Cummings that class sizes would remain within recommended ranges, special education and student support needs would be met and basic maintenance and custodial needs would be addressed. Dr. Cummings felt the district would remain relatively stable through 2025. Dr. Cummings reviewed the following individual accounts; Special Education, Administration, Instruction, Student Services, Maintenance, Insurance, and Civic Activities. Dr. Cummings reviewed the actions he and Mr. Gale took while preparing the FY17 budget which included line reductions, shifting capital plan funds, increased funding from school choice rollover. In conclusion, Dr. Cummings discussed several budget variables which included the remainder of FY16, state funding, Capital funding and upcoming negotiations for nurses, support staff and teachers. Mrs. Often felt this presentation and earlier ones

were very clear and she appreciated the work Dr. Cummings and Mr. Gale put into this budget process. Mr. Carlson was interested in seeing what the delta would be if the district did not have a favorable override vote. He thought this would be good information to share with the residents. If we didn't pass the override what would the consequences be? Dr. Cummings felt class sizes would be affected, support services would have decreased, technology would have been minimized along with the maintenance department. The budget would have been negatively impacted without it. Mrs. Rynning suggested a future meeting with the Town Administrator and School Committee to discuss the Medicaid funding to see where it goes and how much the school benefits from this. Dr. Cummings stated Mr. Gale was already working on this information and they could give an overview at an upcoming meeting. Dr. Cummings ended his overview noting a vote would be required during their following regularly scheduled meeting. Mrs. Rynning urged residents to be involved in the process; if they had questions they were encouraged to send them along via email or a phone call to the office. With no further questions, a motion was made by Mr. Carlson, seconded by Mrs. Cohen to adjourn the budget hearing at 6:55 p.m. Motion carried 4-0 School Committee 2-0 Student Representatives.

Respectfully submitted



Cindy Ide
Recording Secretary



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January 26, 2016
Conference Room F
7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Daryl Rynning, Chairman
Laura Often, Vice Chair
Peter Carlson, Secretary
Maureen Cohen, Member

Student Bianca Carangelo
Representatives: Hannah Kelley

Also Present: Dr. James Cummings, Superintendent of Schools
Tracey Calo, Assistant Superintendent
Daniel Gale, Finance Director

Call to Order – Open Session

1. Chairperson's Update - None

Superintendents Scholar Recognition: Dr. Cummings introduced Max Cruz, a senior at Grafton High School. Annually the MASS and MASC organizations recognize scholars from each district at a luncheon held this year at WPI. Dr. Cummings was proud to announce Mr. Cruz as this year's recipient of the Worcester County Superintendents Scholarship award. Dr. Cummings outlined a few of Mr. Cruz's accomplishments; 4.66 GPA, a student tutor, a recipient of the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, a strong athlete participating in cross country, basketball and tennis. Mr. Cruz was also a certified lifeguard, head referee for flag football and an accomplished pianist. Dr. Cummings congratulated Max for all his accomplishments, noting that moving forward Max planned to study computer science and video game design. The School Committee congratulated Max for his recent award. Mrs. Rynning would like to keep in touch with alumni and see what they were up to in the years to come.

2. Educational Reports

- a. Mass Insight Education – AP Program Review: Mass Insight Senior Field Director, John Smolenski was present to give an overview of their program. He began by stating they had three main goals. 1. To increase participation in mathematics, science and English AP Courses. 2. Increase performance to

receive more qualifying scores on AP examinations and 3. Increase college success seeing more student matriculate to and graduate from college. Mr. Smolenski briefly outlined each goal. It was noted that MIE was currently in many districts throughout Massachusetts from the Berkshires to the Cape. Mr. Smolenski discussed college admissions, course selections, grade point averages, and college success nationally, stating schools affiliated with MIE had an 86% persistent rate. The cost was \$15,000 per year with return on equipment and supplies. Mr. Smolenski said the program also offered a summer institute for teachers to attend which assisted with academic support, student support, program management, and a college success community. The firm would assist with AP nights and student recruiting. They also offered Saturday Student Study sessions. These sessions could be held in Grafton or at other locations. Mr. Smolenski stated that this program was a great way to help the district get more students into AP classes. It was a move towards higher expectations for students. Mr. Carlson thanked Mr. Smolenski for his presentation. He asked if there were examples of schools consistently decreasing in the program and why. Mr. Smolenski said a few had fluctuations but the main reason for this was teacher assignments; when a great teacher leaves a district it could take a while to get back to that level. Mrs. Cohen also thanked Mr. Smolenski stating she was a fan of the program and had seen its results. Immediate actions for the program were discussed such as AP Nights with parents, meetings with the guidance department to develop strategies, assemblies, class visits and a review of program studies. These were items that could begin immediately. Mrs. Often said she had received inquiries from the community relative to expanding AP courses and she felt this would be a cost effective way of doing it. Mrs. Rynning appreciated the presentation, noting Mr. Smolenski was a dynamic presenter; she'd like to have him back in year to review the data. Mrs. Rynning felt early exposure to taking early AP courses was very important to students. With a sense of agreement from the School Committee, Dr. Cummings would move forward drafting a letter of agreement in order to move forward.

3. General Business

- a. FY17 Budget: Mrs. Rynning asked if the committee was ready to move forward with a vote or was more time needed. Mr. Carlson felt there were no major changes throughout the process as presented but asked if the committee felt the need to wait for the 5th member to be appointed. Mrs. Often felt a new member voting on the budget would be uncomfortable and thought they would abstain or just agree with the rest of the members. The candidates interested in the position should have already asked any questions if applicable. Mrs. Cohen was comfortable voting this evening. A motion was made by Mr. Carlson to approve the FY2017 Operating Budget in the amount of \$31,929,557 as presented. Motion seconded by Mrs. Cohen. Mrs. Rynning thanked Dr. Cummings and Mr. Gale for looking so closely at this budget; she trusted their opinions noting they did a very good job presenting a balanced budget that would work for the Town as a whole. Motion carried 4-0 School Committee and 2-0 Student Representatives.

- b. 2016-2017 Calendar - Two draft calendars were submitted to the School Committee for review and discussion. It was noted that the calendar committee did a great job creating these two drafts. Option #1 had school beginning on August 31st ending on June 16th with no snow days and Option #2 school beginning on August 29th ending June 14th with no snow days. Dr. Cummings outlined the differences in the two options stating that if one was more preferable they could vote this evening, or if more questions/concerns needed to be addressed he could bring it back at a later date. Mrs. Often felt the calendars were fairly similar and she thanked the committee for their hard work. Mrs. Rynning agreed, she felt they were very similar. Mrs. Cohen stated she referred the 2nd option; liking the start date, and half day before thanksgiving. Ms. Kelley felt the students would like the first one better. A motion was made by Mr. Carlson that the School Committee accept Option 2 as the 2016-2017 Calendar. Motion seconded by Mrs. Cohen. Motion carried 4-0 School Committee and 1-1 Student Representatives. Mrs. Often would like to see this available to the public as soon as possible and on as many forum s as possible. Mrs. Rynning also noted that changes in February vacation did not receive a lot of discussion but if folks had an opinion they should contact the School Committee.
4. School Committee Member Reports
 - a. Mr. Carlson stated he'd received correspondence about minutes on the web site; he reached out to Dr. Cummings and Mrs. Goodspeed who took action immediately. He thanked them. Mrs. Rynning made it clear the minutes were submitted in a timely fashion and the delay was due to a web site glitch. The town was working on this problem.
 - b. Mrs. Often stated the Wellness Committee was planning a meeting in March and each member had an assignment to focus on; staff wellness, student wellness and social emotional wellness. She stated they had a great group of volunteers and it would be a long term committee. They currently have eight components and were currently focusing on four. They will establish a plan to be a district which optimizes best practices.
 5. Superintendent's Report
 - a. District Update – Dr. Cummings would forward an updated activities plan to members. Katie Weskin was ramping up the adult education classes for this spring. She was working very hard to bring Grafton to a level such as Assabet after Dark. A meeting of the What If Committee was scheduled for Feb 11th the main topic was an update of the Fire Safety Analysis by Jensen Hughes. Dr. Cummings would be attending this meeting. Dr. Cummings thanked Chief Crepeau and his staff for their support during the recent bomb threats which had occurred throughout the state. They helped all involved to be ready and aware. The Unified basketball is staring up with their opening tournament Feb 6th at Stonehill College. Senator Moore's office contacted the district and would like to plan a meeting in April to discuss the state finances.
 6. Future Agenda Planning:

- a. Mrs. Often noted an accident involving a school bus stating the school district handled the situation extremely well. She thanked the bus driver for taking great care of the children. Dr. Cummings said he saw a text book response and thanked all involved, from administration to school personnel.
- c. Mrs. Rynning noted policies still needed review at an upcoming workshop. She would send out meeting date suggestions after February 4th noting this could be a good way for the new member to ease into the position. She also noted they would need to discuss goals and responsibilities at an upcoming meeting.
- e. Dr. Cummings would like the School presentation to begin shortly. They would follow the same basic format, updates, changes, plans & then a school report. At the same time they could invite the appropriate PTG's as well, if it works for their schedules.

7. Approval of Minutes – 2015

A motion was made by Mr. Carlson to approve the Minutes of December 15, 2015 as presented. Motion seconded by Ms. Often. Motion carried 3-1-1 Mrs. Rynning abstain 2-0 School representative.

8. Financial Report

A motion was made by Ms. Carangelo that the School Committee approve Warrant #31, dated February 28, 2016 in the amount of \$336,635.12. Motion seconded by Mr. Carlson. Motion carried 4-0 School Committee and 2-0 School Representatives.

9. Policy - None

10. Correspondence – None

At 8:15 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Carlson adjourn. Motion seconded by Mrs. Often. Motion carried 4-0 School Committee and 2-0 School Representatives.

Respectfully submitted



Cindy Ide
Recording Secretary